United Nations A/58/154

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 July 2003

Original: English

Fifty-eighth session
Item 122 of the preliminary list*
Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

Construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 56/270 of 27 March 2002, the General Assembly approved the construction of additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa with a total area of approximately 6,770 square metres.

2. In accordance with that resolution, progress reports are to be submitted on an annual basis. The present report reviews the progress made on the project since the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/57/322).

II. Status and development of the project

3. The general status and development of the project were outlined in the previous report (ibid., paras. 6-9). The report informed the General Assembly that the request for proposals for professional architectural and engineering services had been submitted to the Procurement Division and that an agreement had been negotiated with the host country regarding tax exemptions for construction material and other construction-related issues. The principal developments since that time are described below.

4. The request for proposals for professional architectural and engineering services was issued to selected firms by November 2002, as scheduled. Four firms were technically and financially evaluated after the closing date in January 2003. During the assessment process, serious doubts were raised by ECA concerning the proposal from the lowest bidder over the company's staffing, continuity and overall responsibility for pre- and post-contract duties. The lowest bidder would, in effect,

* A/58/50/Rev.1 and Corr.1.

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have been substantially subcontracting out the design work and site supervision to a considerably less qualified firm. Two of the other proposals were unacceptable financially, and the Organization had had prior negative experience with the fourth bidder. Careful and extensive consultations at Headquarters and with ECA resulted in a decision to re-bid expeditiously, a process expected to be completed by the end of August 2003.

5. A construction architect was recruited in June 2003 to act as project coordinator at ECA, establishing the basis for the Project Coordination Unit to begin functioning.

6. An agreement between the United Nations and the host Government for additional land to the east of the current ECA compound was concluded in June 2003 with a grant of 21,145 square metres (see annex for proposed site plan), part of which will be utilized for the new building.

7. The difficulties encountered during the review of the proposals received in response to the request for proposals and the decision to re-bid the design work resulted, unfortunately, in a ten-month delay. It is felt, however, that the decision to re-bid is in the best interest of the Organization, as the selection of a poorly qualified architectural and engineering firm could have serious negative consequences for the remaining phases of the construction project.

8. A revised project schedule of design consultancy and construction activities, with milestone dates, is summarized below:

(a) Preparation, mobilization, bidding and identification of consultants is to be completed by September 2003;

(b) Design and preparation of tender and construction documents is to take place from September 2003 to May 2004;

(c) Tender bidding, selection of a construction contractor by the Procurement Division and awarding of the contract is to take place from May to December 2004;

(d) The construction phase is to last from December 2004 to November 2006;

(e) Construction is to be completed in November 2006;

(f) The occupation of the building and the 12-month warranty period is to begin in November 2006.

9. It is expected that the delay will not affect the total cost of the project.

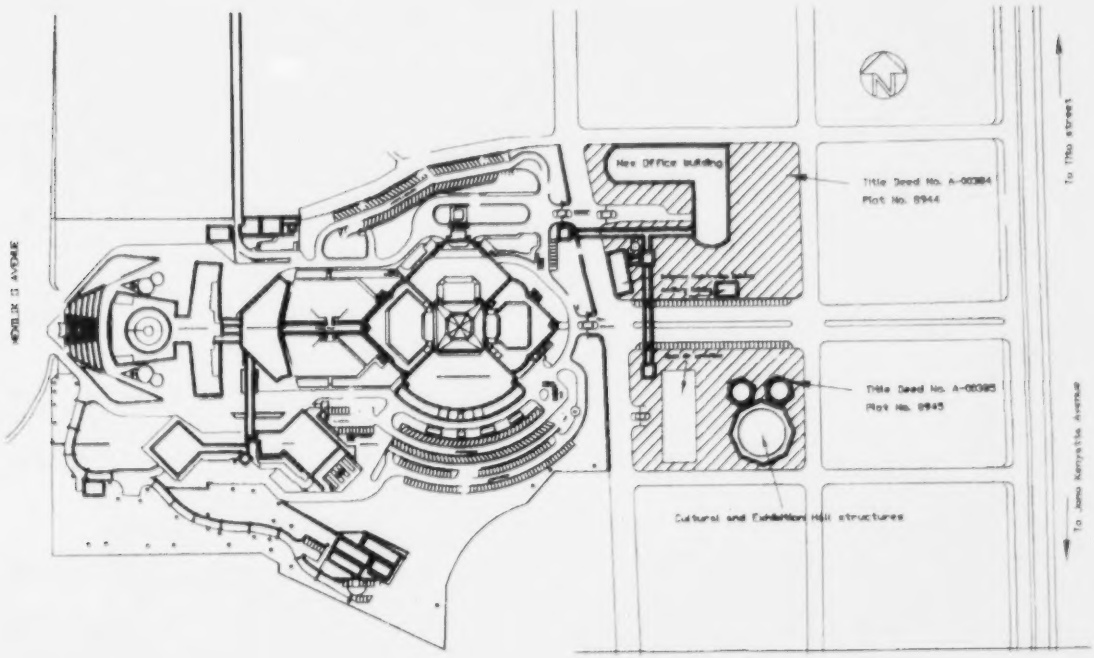
III. Conclusion

10. **The activities related to the construction of additional office facilities at ECA are progressing as per the revised schedule set out in paragraph 8 above.**

11. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.**

Annex

Proposed site plan for additional office facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa[a]



[a] Not to scale.